

Perrot, Thomas (d. 1733)

THOMAS PERROT was one of the earliest dissenting tutors at Carmarthen. He was born at Llan-y-bri, Carmarthenshire. According to a late eighteenth-century manuscript which is not always reliable, Perrot received his academical learning first from Roger Griffith, near Abergavenny, and then from James Owen at Shrewsbury, 1702–6, where the future Tewkesbury tutor Samuel Jones may have been a fellow student (DWL, 24.59, fos. 25–6). He was ordained at Knutsford in Cheshire on 6 August 1706; Matthew Henry participated in the service. Perrot was the minister at Newmarket in Flintshire, 1706–14, where he taught at a school.

In June 1714 Philip Henry's daughter Sarah Savage heard that Perrot was 'in expectation of ye new [Schism] Act taking place, wch he sais will end his teaching school there by ye first of August'; she wrote in her diary of her hopes that God might 'provide some other place for him, & find out some expedient for training up young ones in good & useful learning' (Bod. Lib., Eng. Misc. e.331, p. 3). Perrot was a minister at Bromborough and Upton-in-Wirral, in Cheshire, 1714–19. From 1719 he was the minister at Priory Street in Carmarthen, and here he took ministerial students.

On 2 February 1719, the following entry appears in the Presbyterian Fund Board minutes: 'Upon the Motion of Mr Martin agreed that the Allowance formerly made to Mr Wm Evans of Carmarthen deceased be continued to Mr Thomas Perrot, if he shall succeed him: & that a farther Allowance of Four Pounds be made to the same Mr Perrot from the time of his coming thither; making in all Ten Pounds in Consideration of his teaching of Youth' (DWL, OD68, p. 340). The entry demonstrates that Perrot was seen as Evans's successor at the academy.

On 14 March 1720, the Board, 'Upon the Motion of [a different] Mr Evans agreed that Five Pound a Year be allow'd to Mr Samuel Thomas, A Student, wth Mr Perrot, who has lately begun an Academy at Carmarthen to Commence from Xmas last' (DWL, OD68, p. 360). Further grants of £4 to five of Perrot's students, 'viz. Mr Jenkin Jones Mr Abel Davies Mr Joshua Griffies Mr John Thomas Mr John Williams' were made on 6 March 1721, after they were recommended by Perrot, 'Bowen' (unidentified), Samuel Davies, and other unnamed Welsh ministers (DWL, OD68, p. 383). The Board provided grants to five of Perrot's students in 1722 and four in 1723 (DWL, OD68, p. 420; OD69, p. 19).

In November 1725, the Presbyterian Fund Board described the academies at Carmarthen, Taunton and Findern, as the three places to which 'all the Students who for the future shall be Encourag'd by this fund shall be plac'd'. The rules set by the Board included the continuance of a student for at least three years at an academy; for examination, it was required that the student could render any passage of Cicero's *De Officiis* into English, could read a psalm in Hebrew, translate a passage of the Greek Testament into Latin, give an account of the sciences studied, draw up a thesis on a Latin question, and compose a sermon on a practical subject suitable for a congregation (DWL, OD69, p. 50). Between 1725 and 1728 there were on average six students being funded by the Board at any one time; Perrot also received £7 per annum as the minister of Lammas Street. Roberts states that 'More than 150 Nonconformist students passed through the Academy, besides many who were preparing for Anglican orders', but it is unclear that this figure refers entirely to the time that Perrot was tutor.

According to Rees, ‘It is not known that Mr. Perrot . . . was an Arminian himself; but many, if not the majority, of his students became in course of time the open advocates of Arminian, or rather Pelagian, sentiments’; one such student was the important minister Jenkin Jones, who was admitted to the Carmarthen academy in 1721 (Rees, *Cymru*, 297).

Shortly before his death Perrot delivered a glass vial to the Royal Society, containing the contents of a partially formed chicken, whose belly ‘seem’d to be the Egg cover’d with a soft skin’. Perrot’s vial, and his description of its contents, came to the society via Evan Davies, who communicated his findings to the dissenting tutor and Royal Society fellow John Eames (RS, RBO/18, pp. 1–2).

A late eighteenth-century account of the dissenters’ academies described Perrot simply as ‘of great learning’ (DWL, 24.59, fos. 91–2). He died on 26 December 1733. Perrot’s ~~son~~ (~~correction-nephew~~) Samuel Perrot became a dissenting minister in Somerset before moving to Ireland; his nephew and student Thomas Perrot continued his education at Ebenezer Latham’s academy in Derbyshire before ministering at Blakeney and Kingswood.

Archival Sources

Bodleian Library, Eng. Misc. e.331, pp. 3, 216: References to Thomas Perrot in transcript of Sarah Savage’s diary entries for 13 June 1714, 12 January 1719.

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Dr Williams’s Library, 24.59, fos. 25–6, 89, 91–2: ‘An Account of the Dissenting Academies from the Restoration of Charles II’, c.1780.

Dr Williams’s Library, 38.28: Minutes of the Exeter Assembly, 1721–8.

Dr Williams’s Library, OD68, pp. 340–420: References to Thomas Perrot in the Presbyterian Fund Board minutes, Volume II, 5 Feb. 1694/5 – 4 Jun. 1722.

Dr Williams’s Library, OD69, pp. 19–209: References to Thomas Perrot in the Presbyterian Fund Board minutes, Volume III, 8 Oct. 1722 – 3 June 1751.

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National Library of Wales, MS 401A: Notes of sermons preached at Shrewsbury by James Owen, Thomas Perrot, Francis Tallents, Mr Bradly, Mr Edwards, John Reynolds and John Gyles.

National Library of Wales, SD/1733/28: Inventory of Thomas Perrot.

Royal Society, MS RBO/18, pp. 1–2: Copy of Thomas Perrot’s account of an uncommon form of a chicken, communicated in a letter to John Eames from Evan Davies, Haverford West, 1732.

References

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